

February 1, 2006

Dear Honorable Representatives,

Thank you for introducing House Bill 5606. We support this bill for several reasons.

First, this bill will establish a consistent, minimum baseline for high school diplomas. Under the current state requirement, diplomas represent a wide range of very low to very high competencies. If these proposed high school graduation requirements are adopted, diplomas will represent, at a minimum, competency to course content expectations in the sixteen credits in the Michigan Merit Curriculum and the Michigan Merit Exam.

Second, by achieving a high school diploma with the requirements stated in HB 5606, more high school graduates will pursue post secondary education at a trade school, community college, or university. Students and parents who may not have thought that post secondary education was attainable, will see that they are capable of success at the post secondary level given their success at the high school level.

We ask you to reconsider the last sentence in the section 1-A-ii regarding mathematics:

*If a pupil completed 1 or more of these specified mathematics courses before beginning high school, the pupil shall substitute another mathematics course for each of these courses he or she completed before high school.*

This requirement penalizes students who complete the algebra and geometry requirements earlier than most students. In the Rochester Community Schools, a student can complete two algebra classes and a geometry class by the end of their ninth grade. Some of these students would like to use the credit hours freed by this advanced sequence to take additional classes in their field of study, such as extra science, business, or engineering classes. This requirement hinders students who are aggressively pursuing their field of study.

Please clarify the requirement for two algebra classes in section 1-A-ii. In some school districts, the course commonly called Algebra 1 is taught in two years as Algebra 1A and Algebra 1B, while in some school districts it is taught in one year. Will the courses called Algebra 1A and 1B fulfill the requirements of two math credits? By the same token, will the one year version of the class fulfill the requirements of only one credit? Also, a passing grade in the course commonly called Algebra 2 will be very difficult for some students. Please reconsider this requirement. Teaching methods for this course would have to change substantially to help students be successful in this course.

Thank you for your effort on this bill. The State of Michigan has talented students. We need to have an education system that will help them achieve their potential and be successful.

Sincerely,

Anna Reseigh  
2036 Cumberland  
Rochester Hills, MI 48307

Barb Everson  
3429 Bonniebrook  
Rochester Hills, MI 48306

Annette Testa-Young  
3922 Briarbrook  
Rochester Hills, MI 48306